



Regional Service Council Minutes Region # 1

Meeting Date: August 29, 2006
Meeting Location: Lake County Juvenile Justice Center
3000 West 93rd Avenue
Crown Point, IN

Council Members Present: Jane Bisbee, Melanie Cox, Mary Beth Bonaventura, Glenn Commons, Rita Daniels, Deborah Harris, Cynthia Kambesis, Henry Mosley, Charlotte Peller, Dianne Weiss-Bradley, Lynda Wheeler

Council Members Absent: Richard Ban, Alfred Fisher, Jeffrey Miller, and Elizabeth Tegarden

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 pm

The July minutes were approved by the council members.

Service provider Circle Around Families does not have a current contract with DCS but there are several families and children currently receiving services. The Family and Children Fund will continue to be used for services for existing clients and for any new clients ordered by the courts. Staff from Circle Around Families will have a presentation at the next Regional Service Council meeting.

Thomas Pavkov, Ph. D. presented a review of the Residential Treatment Center Evaluation Project. Those who worked on the project included Thomas Pavkov, Ph.D., Irwin Kerzner, M.S.W., Barbara Gustin, M.A., Richard Hug, Ph.D., Karen Hug, M.P.A., and Ira Lourie, M.D.

The review began in September, 2001, and included conducting 144 visits of 35 residential treatment facilities in Lake County, throughout Indiana, and outside of the state. In 2005, the team expanded the scope to include reviews of the Licensed Child Placing Agencies serving children in Lake County.



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Before the review, the Lake County Director, DCS staff, and Residential Providers met with the review team to develop the protocol for the review project, and to delineate what the team would be reviewing.

The actual process was an arranged visit by 2-3 reviewers who would interview all staff working with the children at a facility. They would interview the children also. This worked well as it made entry into the facility without creating animosity. If it was a second review at a facility, the facility was often eager to showcase what had been done to correct previously identified deficiencies.

There was an increase in quality during the project time period. The psychiatric practice regarding the prescription and distribution of medication has changed and was recently incorporated into the statewide residential contract. Residential facility staff are better at determining what is going on with a child; they document more and have had increased quality in their documentation. After care plans still leave room for improvement.

In 2005, the LCPAs were reviewed. Generally there was little consensus related to the operational definitions of therapeutic foster care across providers. Significant concerns were noted related to the active management of cases. Foster parents were challenged by the number of children for who they were providing care. Less than half of the homes met the requirement of no more than 2 therapeutic foster care children in the home.

Reviewers noted that home studies conducted by LCPAs were often not adequate. The reviewers determined that LCPAs need to devote more resources to the home study process and that the home study would be strengthened by greater involvement of all staff members in foster parent training.





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After a visit to each site a report was compiled and provided to Lake County DCS Administration who shared it with the placement team and staff. The facility was also provided a report and required to respond with their corrective actions if needed. At the end of 2005, Ms. Bisbee requested the team provide a written review of the whole project.

The Regional Service Council members discussed the necessity for monitoring of services and there was a consensus that there is a need to identify best practices and look for providers who provided an outcome based program. The review process should be objective, uniform and done by a third party outside of DCS.

Magistrate Glenn Commons stated that quality assurance must be done and that the review has been a tremendous benefit and has already produced better reports by the LCPAs. We were able to remove children from a facility who was found to be practicing harsh disciplinary practices (i.e. handcuffs). Without quality assurance we would not be able to know about and address these issues.

Judge Mary Beth Bonaventura stated that because of the review process she was able to stand by her decision to not place children at a facility that used harsh disciplinary practices.

Chief Probation Officer Dianne Weiss Bradley noted that we need the review as it has brought about quality and stability and as we are paying for services with taxpayer dollars it is needed for accountability. She also noted that the facilities think it was valuable.

Melanie Cox, DCS Supervisor stated that with the review we can make better decisions to do our job in placing children.

Dr. Hug also thought that to further make the reviews better, access to data



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to show outcomes for the children after their placements have ended.

Division Manager Henry Mosley stated it was good to see the outcome of the many meetings that were held in development of the review process. Meetings were attended by the review team, DCS staff, and providers.

Overall, the RSC strongly felt that a local county focused and locally driven review process of residential facilities and LCPAs has helped in decision making, and in getting the facilities to assess the progress of children. The process is beneficial for planning and to ensure foster positive outcomes for children. In addition the RSC advised that they wanted the "State" to provide monies for this purpose.

As there being no further business, Glenn Commons made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned and Melanie Cox seconded. With the council in approval, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Region 1 Regional Services Council will hold the next meeting on Tuesday September 26 at 3:30PM, same location as above.

